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Interview with Samuel William Searles

Samuel William Searles

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**LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview VHP #057
SEARLES, Samule William**

SEARLES, Samuel William

Drafted: 1943 February 13 - 1945 November 30

Interviewed: November 1, 2005

Interviewer: Ebony Williams

Index by: Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

Length: 00:47:09

Abstract: In his November 1, 2005 interview with Ebony Williams, Samuel William Searles recalls being drafted for the army during WWII. Searles explains his job during war and how he and fellow soldiers celebrated the end of the war. Searles also shares his memories of more of the harrowing experiences of war: segregation, death, and the mental effects of war. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: African American Soldier, draft, segregated army, rationing, food, pastimes, V-J Day, D-Day, air raids, training, medicine, sergeant

Interview Session (November 1, 2005): Digital File

Time	Keywords
00:00:00	<i>Start of Interview/Interviewer's Introduction</i>
00:00:10	<i>Question:</i> When were you born? <i>Answer:</i> January 24, 1924
00:00:18	<i>Question:</i> Where were you raised? <i>Answer:</i> In Augusta, Georgia.
00:00:22	<i>Question:</i> What was your family's educational background? <i>Answer:</i> My father went to, uh, second grade and my mother went to third or fourth, I can't remember now.
00:00:34	<i>Question:</i> What is your current occupation? <i>Answer:</i> I'm retired!retired from Paine College.
00:00:39	<i>Question:</i> What is your current address? <i>Answer:</i> [CENSOR] Augusta, Georgia, I mean Bath, South Carolina.
00:00:47	<i>Question:</i> What is your age? <i>Answer:</i> 81 close to 82
00:00:54	<i>Question:</i> At the time of the war, were you in a relationship, married, or single? <i>Answer:</i> I was single, I was a student.
00:01:05	<i>Question:</i> What school were you attending? <i>Answer:</i> Paine College in Augusta, Georgia

- 00:01:10 *Question:* What was your spouse's or partner's, well..What was your wartime occupation? *Answer:* Wartime? I was in the army! Wartime occupation, yea.
- 00:01:25 *Question:* This is segment 2 of the interview. Where did you live or work during the war? *Answer:* I was in.. I don't understand the question. Where was I working in the war? I was in the army! (laughs) I was in school until I went in the Army. That was during the draft time. I was drafted in the army in February and I was 19 years old and up until that time before I went there, before I went to the Army, I was in school. I was a sophomore in Paine College.
- 00:02:02 *Question:* Ok. What was your main wartime activity? *Answer:* Staying alive! I was a signal corp. We did telephone work, phone line construction and cable work.
- 00:02:15 *Question:* Why did you choose this activity? *Answer:* They assigned me to it. I didn't have a choice.
- 00:02:23 *Question:* What kind of training were you given? *Answer:* I got regular basic training, uh, I wasn't a combat soldier, but I was trained for combat just in case. I was trained to build telephone lines.
- 00:02:41 *Question:* What was your title? *Answer:* Sergeant Searles.
- 00:02:46 *Question:* What kind of activities did you perform? *Answer:* Staying alive. (laughs) Just doing as you were told to do, building the telephone lines, and the communications. Uh, we urn, in England we built cable, underground, though cities and above ground between cities. And after we went to Europe, and Normandy during the Normandy invasions, we just kept communications between, uh, different outfits. Let me see how to explain that. I remember the 12th army group. The 12th army group consisted of the first army, the ninth army, and the third army and they had to have communication because the telephone, even the enemy could hear you if you're talking on the telephone so they needed telephones to communicate.
- 00:03:50 *Question:* Who was your supervisor? *Answer:* I had two commanders. One was Captain Richard B. Strong and the other was named Hershel C. Leget. Uh, I had a first, my platoon sergeant was named Roy A. Jones, he was from Texas. My other Platoon Sergeant, later on in the service, was uh, oh, he's from Columbia, South Carolina, I can't think of his name right now. Prham, Seargent Prham. P-R-H-A-M.
- 00:04:29 *Question:* Alright. What was your specialty at work? *Answer:* Communic...uh, keeping supplies. My specialty was supplying uh, we have what we call a "supply dump". And I took care of the supplies and delivered them as they needed, as they were needed.

- 00:04:51 *Question:* What did you like and dislike about it? *Answer:* Meeting the fellows. I had good people to work with. I had, I met fellows from Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania, and they will always be a part of my life. I will always remember them. I wonder now what happened to them.
- 00:05:20 *Question:* What special rules did you have to follow? *Answer:* I didn't understand that one. What?
- 00:05:28 *Question:* What special rules did you have to follow doing this certain task? *Answer:* Regular army rules. You know, they have job orders. I can't remember now but the same thing all soldiers during that time had to learn and abide by. Like, uh, if you meet an officer you're supposed to salute them at all times. I can't remember all of them things. Sorry. (laughs)
- 00:06:02 *Question:* OK. That's fine, that's fine. If you had children..well..were you unionized? *Answer:* No, No union, you're in the army. (laughs)
- 00:06:15 *Question:* Were you an organizer? *Answer:* No, I was a squad leader, that's about all I could say.
- 00:06:26 *Question:* How did you feel about the unions? *Answer:* It wasn't a union, it's the army. (laughs)
- 00:06:34 *Question:* Did you develop friendships during training or the activity itself? *Answer:* Oh yes, uh, lifelong. I'll remember them for the rest of my life, some of the fellows I remember and serve with. I love them like I would a brother, some of them. I respected all of them. Because although we weren't a combat outfit, our lives depended on each other. We didn't go into battle, but we saw some action that was thrust upon us.
- 00:07:07 *Question:* Did you have family or friends in the service or doing war work? *Answer:* I had, uh, my sister had a husband. He was in the army. He was in the Corps. Master. He became a master.
- 00:7:34 *Question:* Now for segment 3 of the interview. How did you feel about the war? *Answer:* It's something that had to be done, according to the media. (laughs) We didn't start the war, and they started and uh, when your country calls, you have to go. It was during the time of separate but equal type thing in the United States but we still loved home. You have to think about family and uh, friends who are back home. You want them to be proud of you so you do the best you can.
- 00:08:16 *Question:* Which war did you serve in? *Answer:* World War II, Europe.
- 00:08:22 *Question:* And what were the dates of this war? *Answer:* The date of the war? The war started when uh, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on

December 7, 1941, but i didn't go in the army until February of '43 when I was en, not enlisted, I was drafted. Drafted, and they had that in effect, the government had that in effect to get soldiers, and I went in, in February of '43.

00:08:54 *Question:* What were your family's or friend's feelings of your being in the war? *Answer:* My mother never stopped worrying about me, did a lot of praying for me. And uh, I understand there was a lot of prayer going out for all soldiers. There was a church in Augusta that sent me the Sunday school lesson every month of what happened during that month. I used to share it with, uh, some of my friends who were very religious. Some of them were aspiring ministers, preachers, and they were very glad to get those Sunday school lessons.

00:09:38 *Question:* In what ways did the war change your activities or habits? *Answer:* I, uh, learned to smoke although it's, (laugh) it's something I, uh, I didn't learn to smoke a cigarette but I learned to smoke a pipe, I love a pipe. I, uh, didn't drink, and I didn't start drinking until after I came out the army. Uh, I became more serious about life and after spending the three years in, almost the three years in the army, I felt like I was behind, uh, life, accomplishing things in life because, uh, soon as I could I got a job. I felt like I was behind time because fellows who are looked on upon as little fellows, they were now in school with me, same age bracket doing the same things I mean, although I had them about 3 or 4 years. That's about all I can think of right now.

00:10:52 *Question:* Ok. Were you or others in your community treated differently because of you gender, ethnicity, race, or other factors? If so, how did you or others react? *Answer:* You mean during the army? While I was in the army? Yeah, we had a segregated army, and I was black. We were treated differently. Uh, I hate to bring it up, but German prisoners were treated better than some black soldiers, American soldiers, we had on the same uniform. That doesn't rub anybody right, that rubbed us wrong, but you do what you was supposed to do because of your family back home. You want them to feel proud of you and you also wanted to prove to the world that you were just as good as anybody. That was very, very, uh, prevalent in my normal fellows who were in the army with me. They want to show the world that we can do as good as anybody.

00:11:55 *Question:* What were some of the first changes in your life after The war started? *Answer:* Well, going from civilian to a soldier is one big thing. One thing, but ,uh, you have to cope. It wasn't as bad as I thought in some ways and it was, uh, you have to survive.

00:12:28 *Question:* What different responsibilities did you have to take on? *Answer:* I was the commander of, uh, 13 men, and, uh, that was one responsibility. They had the, after I got my training, and we got our training together, I was selected, uh, as the squad leader and I had to get those guys to work

with me so I could prove myself to my superiors. We did our job good, we were real proud of what we did and we made a game out of it, we were gonna do better than other squads.

00:13:15 *Question:* What social activities were you involved in at work or after work with coworkers? *Answer:* There wasn't no after work, not during war, not during wartime. You're constantly in action, one way or another.

00:13:32 *Question:* How did you entertain yourself outside of work? *Answer:* Uh, we read the magazines. We read *Life Magazine* and *Time* and, uh-what's the name of the other one, I can't think of the name of other one-I think *Saturday Evening Posts*, uh, *Reader's Digest*-they were very popular, *Reader's Digest* was. And then they had some army newspapers, um, that we read. One came out weekly and one came out monthly. I can't think of their names right now, but they were what we read. We didn't have too many radios, but we were entertained by USO troops, uh, groups. They would come and put on shows for us at certain times, which we all looked forward to. Uh, I'll always be, feel ,uh, good about the Red Cross because they would turn up sometimes when you least expected them to with hot chocolate, cocoa, and uh, coffee and donuts and magazines from home, cards to play with, and cigarettes, we always got cigarettes. (laughs) I swapped my cigarettes for Hershey Chocolate Bars.

00:14:59 *Question:* Did you or others get married during the war? *Answer:* ...during the time I was in the army, I didn't, we didn't have time for that. (laughs)

00:15:08 *Question:* Did you worry that our side might not win? *Answer:* No! I never worried about it. I thought we'd win. Uh, during the battle of the Bulge, uh, that was the worse time, uh ,we had. Other than the invasion, the Normandy invasion itself. But even during the Normandy, I mean, the Battle of the Bulge, I never worried about it. I was close to it. I was about 20 miles from, uh, Normandy, uh, Bastogne and, uh, I wasn't worried about it. I thought we might have to face the Germans man to man, but I wasn't worried about it. And sure enough when the weather cleared up the airplanes took care of everything. (laughs)

00:15:54 *Question:* Did you know anyone who was killed or wounded in the war? *Answer:* Yes, urn huh, I knew some fellows. I had, uh, several incidents that still sticks with me real good. There was a corporate in my outfit named Ruben he was ...uh, and he'd never go to town, this was when we was in England. And the guys used to say, "Man, let's go to town sometime!" and he'd sit there are read, and one day he finally decided to go to town and he got in an air raid, German air raid, and got killed. I'll never forget that. It's almost like we talked him into going to get killed.

00:16:49 *Question:* Could you tell me about corresponding via letters or otherwise with friends or family in the service? *Answer:* Yea I had ,uh, I wrote, naturally I wrote my family, my mother, uh, my daddy didn't do much

writing, but I heard from him through my mother. My sister wrote a lot, I had friends who was in school with me. They wrote me religiously, I'd get a letter from them anytime, almost every week. And they had something called email, if you write a letter home, they would make a photo static copy of it and send that, rather than send a bulky letter, and uh, that was email, that was one of the things that was unique to me during that time.

00:17:40 *Question:* What effect did the war have on your physical and mental health or that of others you knew? *Answer:* I know some fellows that come back and they became alcoholics. I know some when they got back they, uh... they got very religious, they...And I don't think I changed much, myself, I don't think so. I got a little more serious about life. That's something that'll make a person think, what happened to you. I saw some guys come back they was, drink, drink, drink.

00:18:27 *Question:* Do you think that medical care changed because of the war? *Answer:* Medical care? Yes, urn huh. I think, uh, I think, I'm not sure about this, but all soldiers had a first aid kit. I think the only thing they had in them first aid kits, one of the things they had in them first aid kits was, uh, sulfur, powder. If a guy got wounded, they'd put that sulfur powder on there. And uh...then they come out with penicillin and that was new. That's new and, you know, it revolutionized things for us, for everybody. And uh, that's it, about all, I could think of, relate to.

00:19:15 *Question:* Ok. Did you have worthwhile experiences because of the war? *Answer:* Yea. I come from the segregated south. When I got to Europe, there wasn't no segregation and that was...another world to me. Uh, they treated me good and I love England, I love France, especially France, and, uh Belgium too. And one thing that stand out is even during wartime how clean Germany was with all the cities all tore up, well except for the rubber, it was clean, clean and pretty. I remember that about Germany.

00:20:11 *Question:* What was your most memorable experience? *Answer:* That's hard to say, most memorable. I can't say no, pick out no one incident. Except getting my discharge...that, that (laughs) uh, that's a story. I was in line at Fort Gordon getting ready to get my discharge and they had a ceremony. I was in line, uh, getting the shots and checking out-I can't think of the word to use- mustarded out, but then we were going through this procedure, army procedure, lined up and the guy told me behind me said somebody's family came to see him. And, uh, I didn't pay him any attention then he said "They even brought the dog" and that made me look. I looked out the window and I saw my family, my mother, my father, and my sister, and my dog, and that knocked me out. It was like looking at a picture in black and white and suddenly it's in color. I'll always remember that. (laughs) yes ma'am, I'll always remember that...November 30, 1945.

- 00:21:45 *Question:* What was your most memorable character? *Answer:* Character? Uh...my platoon sergeant Roy Jones... Roy A. Jones. He was not a few years older, but he was all soldier. He was a good guy, a good guy to know.
- 00:22:12 *Question:* What was your most humorous experience? *Answer:* So many of them. (laughs) uh, one was...one truck, going down this road. On the right hand side of this road was a high... bank, on the left hand side was a open field. The Germans had a weapon they called the "bulls bomber", the B1. And these things would fly low where you could see them and the motor would cut off and when would the motor cut off that's where the bomb fell, it was just like a flying bomb. And this bomb fell, fell near us, didn't hurt anybody but it knocked the truck off the road on the high and bank end side. And uh, we, you know, nobody hurt, just knocked over. Now if we would have gone on the other side, somebody would have got hurt. We would have fell on the side and knocked on up against the wall, against the bank. I remember that, it was funny, because everybody was scared and laughing at the same time. Some other incidents, but I couldn't talk about none... (laughs) no I couldn't talk about them.
- 00:23:33 *Question:* (laughs) Ok. Have you visited any memorials or participated in any commemorations of the war? *Answer:* No. Uh, I been to Washington, went to the old memorials, you know the Washington monuments, the Lincoln memorials, that type stuff, but nothing related to World War II. I haven't been to anything related to World War II. I understand they have some things in Washington but, I've seen some monuments in different cities dedicated to World War II veterans but i haven't been to any of them, anything like that.
- 00:24:14 *Question:* Was there a lack of social opportunities and friends because of the war? *Answer:* Opportunities? Yea, you're restricted during war time. You can't do too much socially. You're just there. You get up every day, you do what you supposed to do, and if you get a chance, you go to sleep and start all over the next day. It's, it's hard to describe...you can't...answer it like you would just an ordinary interview somebody on a job or something. A war time is a war time...And it's so different now then it was then, in fact, ours was so much different from World War I.
- 00:25:07 *Question:* How did you community respond to the war and civil defense initiatives? *Answer:* The whole country was geared towards helping win the war. We had gas rationing, food rationing, they had what they call food stamps, uh, gasoline stamps. You could only get so much food or so much gas. And uh, one of the funny things that happened in my family was getting milk. If you had ,uh, babies you get more milk, canned milk, than you, someone who didn't have canned milk. And my family tells us about...my sister had her teeth extracted and had to get dentals...and daddy got some milk, she, my sister 8 years older than me so you'll understand what I'm saying. Daddy went to get some milk and he had more than he was supposed to have and the lady, uh, man asked him "Oh, you have a

baby?" He said "She teething" (laughs) he didn't tell him it was a baby because daddy wouldn't lie about things. He just said "she teething" and they let him have the milk. (laughs)

00:26:34 *Question:* Did child care activities change for mothers? *Answer:* I don't know. There wasn't no babies in my family, see, I couldn't say. I'm pretty sure it must have. Other than what I just said about getting milk, if you had babies you could get milk and, uh, other things related to babies. But it didn't happen in my family other than what I just said about my baby, my sister teething. (laughs)

00:27:02 *Question:* Could you tell me about shortages and rationing of food and gas? *Answer:* Well, I just mentioned that, I answered your question before you asked me.

00:27:12 *Question:* Yes, sir. Did you have a victory garden or other ways to get enough food? *Answer:* My mother had a garden .Yea, she had a garden, and she had chickens... she had chickens, too. Although we lived in town, during that time you can have livestock in towns. She had chickens and had a small garden in the back yard.

00:27:42 *Question:* How did you cope with war time shortages? *Answer:* I didn't, I was in the army (laughs). Didn't have to, got everything we needed.

00:27:56 *Question:* Could you talk about recycling of rubber, grease, or other commodities? *Answer:* No, I know it was, uh, uh, government had a thing about you know, saving, uh, on things, but I don't remember recycling too much. I'm not up on that. Recycling came out late...I do know sometimes they used to buy scrap metal...and uh, as people would say, conserve on uh, save gas so it'll have some, but, uh, it didn't hit me because I wasn't home it didn't bother me I didn't have a car either so it really didn't bother me. So I...I'm sorry, I can't...elaborate on that any.

00:28:56 *Question:* To what extent was there hoarding or black market activity in your area? *Answer:* Not that I know of. I do know from reading that there was some hoarding and, uh, black marketing. But uh, I've heard things but I don't *know* them.

00:29:14 *Question:* How did you feel about war news form newsreels or radio? *Answer:* Yea, that's the way you can keep up with what was happening. We didn't have TV. then and so if you...you had to go..you had to depend on the media find to what was happening. You know radio and uh, radio and newspapers, magazines, that's the only way you could keep up with what was happening. One of the things that struck me funny and different was we was in smaller towns in Europe. They had a town crier and he would come out at a certain time of day and ring a bell and the village would gather round him and he would read the news to them and tell them what was happening. I thought that was unique, I had never seen that before.

(laughs) We had, uh, a lot of starchy foods. We had powdered eggs. We, uh, had potatoes almost every meal. We had a lot of dehydrated foods. One was called D ration and the other was called K ration. Then they had another one called 10 and 1. The 10 and 1 was very, very good. But the D ration was just a little brown box about the size of a cracker jack box and ,uh, everything in it was just something to eat. It didn't have no taste. As I remember, they had a small can of uh meat, something like meat, had some little dried cookies, had maybe two or three pieces of, uh, candy, and uh, they had little cellophane packets... packets, and then the packet would either mix to make something like a kool-aid, uh, something to drink. That's mostly sometimes be a little tea flavor but mostly was something you just put in water and stir it up and drink it. It was...that was the worse...the ultimate. (laughs)

00:31:30 *Question:* How often did you send letters home? *Answer:* Regularly, I wrote regularly, I... I... I can't say. Well, I had a lot of people to write. I wrote my family, my sister, my mama, my daddy, my sisters, my aunts, and uh, a lot of people who went to school with me. Uh, I had to answer their letters because it was, uh, something they were encouraging people at home to write soldiers. So when I would get a letter, I would always try to answer it. I did quite a bit of writing.

00:32:08 *Question:* How long did it take for your mail to reach you? *Answer:* That's hard to say. Sometimes... I can't, I can't answer that not really say how long it took, I can't say. I do know it took...it didn't take a long time, but sometimes it would sometimes it didn't. Sometimes mail would come to uh, the states to Europe and, uh, but it would have trouble getting the mail to us because we would be moving, and busy. Then sometimes when you catch us the mail has accumulated while the mailed has been trying to catch up with you.

00:32:55 *Question:* How did you feel when the war ended? *Answer:* Happy ain't the...is not the word... I guess say... elated. Um...and then a little apprehensive because I didn't know what to expect when I got back home. And I did have trouble when I got back home, I couldn't adjust back to school life. I tried to go back to school and it just didn't fit. I wish I had stuck it out now. I quite school during my junior year. I consider that one of the biggest mistakes I made in my life.

00:33:35 *Question:* What did you do when you heard about the news of the war ending? *Answer:* Uh, hollered and screamed. (laughs) The war in Europe ended in May. And uh, we were celebrating that. Some guys shooting the guns in the air, some guys praying, and uh, just like, just happy, just a happy time. But what happened, the war in Europe ended but the war in Japan hadn't ended. And we went through a period of waiting what we were going to do then after the war in Europe. Are we going to Japan now? Uh, most of us had been in Europe all this time and hadn't even had any, uh, what you say, fallows. And uh, we wanted to go home before we go to

European Pacific Theater and uh, in August the Pacific War ended. And, that was just it. That was a happy, happy, happy, utopia!

- 00:34:52 *Question:* Where were you on V-E Day? *Answer:* I was in France, in France waiting to be redeployed, but I didn't know whether I was gonna come home or go to the Pacific Theater, so the war ended, and we knew that we were coming home then.
- 00:35:13 *Question:* V-J Day? *Answer:* Yea, that...well, V-E Day, we were still fighting until it happened. But V-J Day was the end of all of the wars. That's when I, I thought answered, when I answered the first time I thought I was answering it. But V-J Day was, uh, was the big on, when everybody stopped fighting. I knew we were coming home then. It was the same atmosphere. Everybody talking about coming home, what they were gonna do when they got home, that type thing. We had, uh, they had...you got out the army according to what they had point systems. You got out the army according to points. You got points for your time serve, and you got points for medals, you got points for battles you been in. We got out early because we had been in five major battles and each battle counted for five points and that helped get us out early. We got out earlier than some people who had been in a lot longer who was in, uh, outfits who didn't see any combat. One incident I had, one of my, my...we had a Sergeant Camper. He was a platoon sergeant and a B Company and the guys was getting on the truck to go to the port of deprecation and he read his letter from home and he read the letter to the fellows and let them know some of the things they were to expect when he get home. Uh, he got a letter from a neighbor saying that when the war ended and when his wife found he was coming home, she moved. And uh, he was telling us, you know, don't expect to find everything like when you get back home because he knew his life, his family was destroyed then because his wife found out he was coming, home she left. (laughs)
- 00:37:38 *Question:* How would you describe the ways that the war changed your life and those of others? *Answer:* It didn't change my life very much. I had, we had what we call, uh, G.I Bill. The G. I. Bill helped the veterans who wanted to go to school, to go to school. To pay the tuition and books, all you had to do was go and study and they would give you a little stipend, some money on the side. And uh, some people advantage of it and some people didn't. And they had something called G.I Bill that'll help you start a business if you wanted to. In the G. I Bill you could build you a house if you wanted, those the type things. If the bank would lend you money, the government would back you up. If you didn't pay it, they would take it too and sell it to somebody else, but I'm just saying, those are some of the things that uh, helped you if you wanted to use it.
- 00:38:43 *Question:* Did you keep your job or continue other wartime activities after the war? *Answer:* I went back to school until I got a job. I dropped out of school, big mistake, but I did. And I got a job and I worked on the job for

20 years, and I left that job and I went to another job and I worked on that job for 20 years and then I retired. I'm an old man now. (laughs)

00:39:08 *Question:* What were you doing before you retired? *Answer:* I worked on Paine College Security and school photographer.

00:39:18 *Question:* Is there one thought about your wartime experience that you want to share with future generations? *Answer:* Not especially. What I experienced in the war is not something I'd want other people to experience. Wouldn't want to have to do it again... I'm glad I went, but I wouldn't want to do it again. Discipline...that's very good, you get a lot of good discipline in the army and that's very important. And that's about all I can relate to, like I said, when you leave I can think of a million things.

00:40:16 *Question:* Ok. Is there anything else I should ask you? *Answer:* I can't think of anything. I think you covered things pretty good, uh, yea I think you did it. I wish I could add something to what we've done but, uh, basic training was tough and one of the things that struck me was you're trained to do things but then when you get in actual, on duty, so to speak, you don't even need that training. I, uh, they trained us about first aid, I never had to use first aid. They told us about gas, we had to go through a class about poison gas, never had to worry about that because gas was outlawed from World War I, but we were trained for it anyway, gas masks at all times. The experience...when my outfits worked in the three armies-the first army, the ninth army, and the third army-and it was interesting to notice the difference in the three sections you would be in. When you were in the third army, which was General Patton, you got the best of everything. But you also had to be "A1, A" soldier. I had experiences with white troops who, because I was black or because we was black would take advantage of us and try us, and that struck me funny, different, then we would meet another group and they were alright. They, you know, they treated us like you were another soldier. I saw things that I didn't know...had no idea I would see. I remember during ,uh, air raids American planes going over...you couldn't see nothing especially up close to D-Day, you could look up in the sky and couldn't see anything but airplanes. American planes going, bombing, coming back, going, bombing...I've seen airplanes shot up, landing, damaged real bad. And uh, I used to talk to the...I did talk to a couple of ...uh, air force pilots and told him how much we admired them and uh, he made me think about something he say 'Well, we go and come every day. He say 'we go and we drop bombs, and if we get back we get to sleep in a nice warm bed at night.' He said 'When y'all go, you won't be able to do that.' And I hadn't thought about that, and it was true. (laughs) No, we didn't get too many warm beds and very few nice baths. You could take your helmet and shave in it, bathe in it, and sometimes cook in it. That little steel, they call it steel pot on your head, you could take helmet light it and put it on fire. And you could cook, you could shave with it. I wasn't shaving at the time, I didn't know how to shave. But uh, I've seen it used for so many different things. Another thing that striked me funny was the

gasoline...we were talking about the gasoline shortage...we're have problems now. And uh, we had plenty gas, that's all we had...gas, gas, gas. The guys made a fire, a little stove they could bum gasoline in, I didn't know about that...how to make nothing like that. The guys took barrels and made a heater out of them they could warm up on, burning out the gas, bum the gas out the pans and all. Oh, one of the things that struck funny was a bunch of soldiers was a bunch of soldiers. They were very loud, say anything, do anything, and during the Battle of the Bulge we were in Germany when it happened. We had to go further up into Germany and go over into Holland and then got back down into France. While... While we was in... we went to Holland and we spent two nights in a catholic school. The students weren't there but the nuns were still there. And I'll always remember how nice those guys was around those nuns. All this cussin' and screamin' and hollerin', they was like little Sunday school kids. I'll always remember that, I can't believe it's the same fellows acting gentlemanly around these ladies. I've seen guys, uh, get stockings and go to town and live like kings. Just a pair of silk stockings from home. Uh, Sugar. Everybody wanted some sugar. Especially....the kids would ask, little kids...there's something about kids and soldiers and the fact that all soldiers loved kids and the kids were always around. They had a saying "cigarettes for papa", uh, no, "bun bun for me" that's candy for him, "cigarettes for papa" and "sugar for the mama". And you know, they'd beg. (laughs) Other things that happened I can't talk about. They were comical, but you can't put them on this...no way.

00:46:50 *Question:* Is there anything you would like to and on this subject? *Answer:* No, I think I just did that.

00:47:09 *End of interview*

